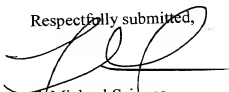


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Applicants have made such amendment to facilitate prosecution of the application. Applicants reserve the right to file one or more continuation on any of the cancelled claims.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



F. Michael Sajovic
Registration No. 31,793




20792

PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Box AF, Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 20231, on December 23, 2002



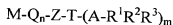
Susan E. Freedman
Date of Signature: December 23, 2002



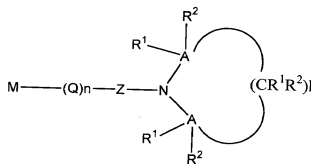
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Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

17. (Twice Amended) A hydrocarbon composition comprising **[one or more]** at least two protected functionalized chain extended anionic polymerization initiators **[or]** of the formula



or of the formula



wherein:

M is lithium;

Q is a saturated or unsaturated hydrocarbyl group derived by incorporation of at least one conjugated diene hydrocarbons or mixtures thereof;

Z is a straight chain hydrocarbon connecting group which contains 3-25 carbon atoms;

T is oxygen;

$(A-R^1R^2R^3)_m$ is a protecting group in which A is carbon and R^1 , R^2 , and R^3 are alkyl;

n is >0 and <1 ; and

m is 1.